

Reformers of the Nineteenth Century.

A LECTURE,

Delivered before the

Young Men's Christian Association, of Halifax, N. S.

ON TUESDAY EVENING, JAN. 29, 1867.

BY

REV. G. M. GRANT, A.M.

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HALIFAX, N. S.

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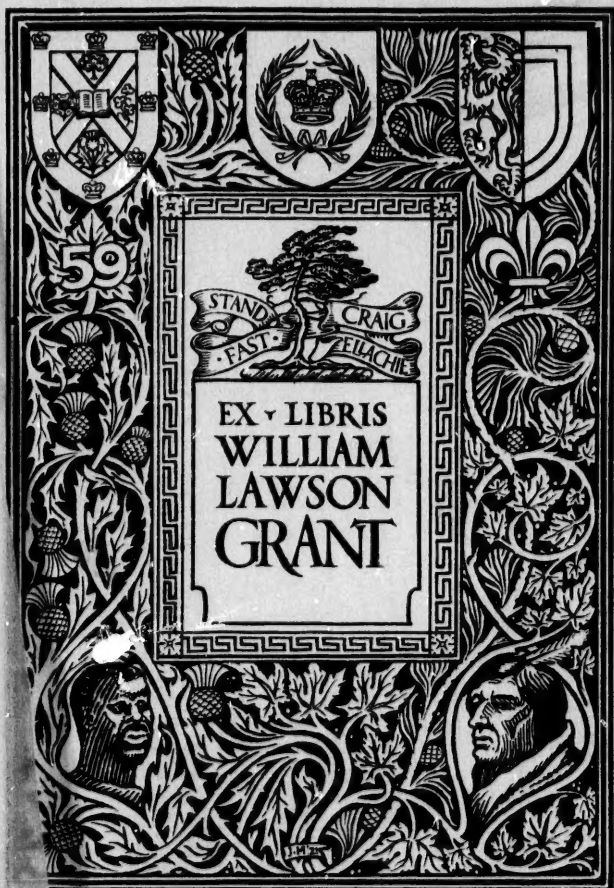
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## Reformers of the Nineteenth Century.

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I MEAN not politicians, but moral and spiritual Reformers ; not philanthropists, but prophets, or in other words poets and thinkers. Was there need of such in this Century ? Where was there room for them ? Before Christ there were the prophets ; fifteen centuries after Christ the Reformers. Did not they in the realm of the spiritual do all that was required to be done ? Does the soul need, or can it ever need anything that it cannot find in them ? Have they any representatives in our day, except Dr. Cumming and John Bright ? Questions such as these would be put to me by not a few, if they could only express what they believe they ought to think, and it is just possible that I may be misunderstood, by these well-meaning inclined-to-be-censorious persons. Of nothing are they so intolerant as of an idea that does not square with their system. This class of people will not be patient ; will not believe that there is any wisdom in what has been unknown to them. What ! do you mean to tell us that *we* have not the whole truth ; and must not those who differ from us be wrong ? Is not all truth in the Bible ; and thanks to the Reformation, have we not an open Bible ? And what more is needed ?

If you look at the state of things in the 18th century, all over Europe it would seem that something more was needed. It was not by any means a desirable century for a spiritual man to live in. The war of giants that had shaken Europe for nigh two centuries, ended with the thirty years war and the peace of Westphalia in 1648, and with the triumph of the Parliament over the King in England, about the same time ; and tho' in so long a contest both sides could boast of success, of ground lost but recovered, it could not be denied that the issue left the victory and the fruits of victory with the Reformers, and the new order of things. New principles had asserted their right to a place in the field of human

life and society. The Empire and the Papacy, representatives of the old system, had done their best to put them down, and had failed. The new principles proved not to be fancies, but truths; they endured the long ordeal; they extorted recognition; and they were twice blessed; for they blessed those who accepted and those who rejected them. The germ of the two great thoughts that are at the basis of all modern European life, viz.: the supreme rights of the individual and the supreme rights of the nation, was contained in the new movement, and in its triumph they triumphed. As well try to restore the Heptarchy now, as after that to restore the Holy Roman Empire, or the Mediæval Church, though in their day both had been blessings, both had been necessary to the world's future, and both had been the free, voluntary, and democratic choice of their members.

Well, the Reformation succeeded; gained for itself room and verge; could unbuckle its sword and open its Bible, and construe its confessions, and carry out its principles into practice, none daring to make it afraid. On the Continent, Lutheran, Reformed, and Romanist drew breath, looked hard at each other, concluded that it was no use to fight any more, and since they could not agree, agreed to differ. In Britain, the Revolution Settlement gave a Presbyterian Clergyman to every parish in Scotland, and England and Ireland were pretty much handed over to Protestant Episcopacy. And now surely all would go well. Anti-Christ had been chained. The golden age would come. The Pentecostal days would return to the Church, and the State would be its nursing father. So fondly dreamed all men; and by continually asserting that it must be so, they began to believe especially in England that it was so; that with them was the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; and that there was no religion, and very little morality, or learning, or roast beef anywhere else. A flattering unction to lay to the soul, doubtless; but how stood the facts? Why, that in all spiritual things there had hardly been so barren a century as the eighteenth, since the christian centuries began. When Thomas Carlyle says of it, that "What little it thought may be called Voltaire; what little it did, Frederick the Great," he is unjust to it: but only because he exaggerates. Samuel Johnson, lived in it, and almost redeems it. Burns lit up its latter decades

with a fire that consumed much of its dross. But little truth, little heroism, little faith lived and reigned in it. True there were working clergy in every part of the country that feared God, honored the King, and did their duty in a manful enough way. There was a leaven of good men and pure women in all ranks: for you can say of every age that there are good people in it, and bad people too. But the question is, which set gives the tone to the whole—which reigns and is acknowledged to have right divine? Which—the rascals or the righteous, the hypocrites or the true men? By that, judge the country and the age. And of the 18th century, when expediency was made the basis of morals, and probability of religion, what shall we say? What, but that it seemed to have lost the tradition, not only of Puritanism, but of Christianity itself. If at Court there was less coarseness than in the Nell Gwynn, and Duchess of Portsmouth period, there was more flunkeyism. There was timeserving in the church, from the curate upwards, and a regular system of money bribery in Parliament; Horace Walpole was the Macænas of the century, and Strawberry Hill the *chef d'œuvre* of architecture. It was thought a clever thing in the clergyman who lost a bet to the King's mistress and thereby gained a Bishopric. And Dr. Binkes, in his sermon before convocation, draws a parallel between the sufferings of Jesus Christ and those of King Charles the Royal Martyr, and gives the preference to the latter, in point of right, character, and station. The Deistical writers were answered by able works, on the evidences which proved that there was no reason why there should not be such a thing as religion; in fact Porteous and Paley and others,\* made out that there was a considerable probability in its favour. Was it any wonder that Wesley and Whitfield, should have the pulpits of London forbidden them, and have to go out as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," to the savages of the Kingswood Collieries, moving them with the simple story of the Cross, till the tears made channels down their grimed faces, as rivers of water seam the black country. And the blight was on the Dissenters, perhaps more than on the National Church. Many of their congregations died out with the dry rot; the most intellectual and

\*I need scarcely say that I do not refer here to Bishop Butler, whose works would be a contribution to ethics from any century.



wealthy of them became Unitarian. For a time it was not as bad in Scotland: for the common people prized their faith, and clung to it with national tenacity, and the Parish Schools maintained a general intelligence that no other part of the Empire could pretend to. The bulwarks of orthodoxy appeared intact; there was good preaching, respectable scholarship, and first rate society in Edinburgh. But alas! living faith had pretty well died out in town and country. David Hume goes on Sunday to hear Dr. Jupiter Carlyle, preach in Home's pulpit, and hearing only heathen morality, sits him before dinner for treating the honest Lothian folk to one of Cicero's Academics, and Jupiter repeats the remark as if he considered it quite a compliment. The old forms were kept up, but the old life was not in them. And not in Spain or Italy were grosser mummeries of holy things to be seen, than in Scotland, till Robert Burns' sarcasm expelled them, and by demolishing the lies prepared the way for truth. Great was the consternation in the Church, both among the clergy and laity, and furious the denunciations, when the Holy Fair, and the Kirk's Alarm, and Holy Willie's prayer, and such like satires came out in quick succession. But a good work was done; it was felt by all that "national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet;" that here was a man with an eye that saw through all disguises straight to the heart of things, and with a soul that loathed hypocrisy, and shams, however respectable or sacred; one that could sing with a melody that took all hearts captive, while he did a true prophet's work for his day and generation. On the Continent also the whole land seemed stricken with barrenness. Holland had gained its freedom, and then ceased to bear heroes. The simple faith of the Brethren of the Common Lot, the self-sacrifice and wisdom of William the Silent, and the Defenders of Leyden, of DeWitt and Ruyter, give place to mere huckstering, and orthodoxy. The land of Luther produced a meagre rationalism, that took possession of the schools, though the mystics kept up a protest against the fashionable illuminism, and hymns kept the flame of piety alive in the peasantry of many districts. Geneva did something positive for a new system of things, though it was a something that Calvin would have stared at, when she sent forth Jean Jacques Rousseau. But certainly there was more living faith in

the truths of Christianity during the Eighteenth century at the Vatican, than at any of the head-quarters of Protestantism. In France Voltaire was educated by the Jesuits, who little guessed when handling the youth that they were playing with edged tools; and that that keen eye was looking them through and through, and seeing how all the strings were pulled. He and the Encyclopedists finished the work of destruction. David Hume tells of being at a supper party with a lot of them and finding that they hardly considered him worthy of the name of philosopher, i.e. infidel. He was the only one present who thought that there might be a God. Faith was completely eaten away, and then the mine was sprung under the fabric of Society, and the whole existing order of things was blown into the air with a crash and destruction that seemed worthy to herald in nothing less than the end of all things mundane, and the immediate coming of the Day of Judgment. So ended the Eighteenth Century, with an event which forms the second great landmark in the history of modern times. The first landmark was the Reformation; the second was the French Revolution. The key-note of the first was moral individualism: the key-note of the second was political individualism. The first principle has now thoroughly established itself. No sane man doubts it, though all its relations have not been satisfactorily determined. The second after a struggle of now three quarters of a century is pretty generally accepted, but by no means universally. A good deal of blood will need to be spilled over it yet, and perhaps another three quarters of a century elapse before Europe agree deliberately and finally to accept it. But what have we to do with the French Revolution, you ask? Was not that a matter wholly for the French, and without any more influence on general modern society, than the Taiping movement? By no means, my friend, though I confess that the estimate formed of it by the general British mind, is ludicrously disproportioned to the magnitude of the event itself and to the estimate formed by every one else; and great is the astonishment of the man who has been brought up to regard the French Revolution with simple horror as a bursting forth of the pit, and to regard it as something exclusively French, when he comes to find the importance attached to it by all Continental and not a few American and English writers. With them it is the breaking up of

the old social order, and the dawn of the new era in which we are living. It means the abolition of class-legislation, and of all the forms, shows, disqualifications or privileges feudal or otherwise that had for centuries been connected therewith all over Europe. It was the assertion of the Sovereignty of the people and of the doctrine of the liberty, equality, fraternity of all men. France is professedly based on these modern principles: so is Italy: Germany in 1848 made a dead lift to realize 'hem but was thrown back, only however to rally for other efforts. And mutterings of them are heard over all the rest of Europe.

The French Revolution meant two things: (1) The destruction of old lies; (2) The assertion of a new truth. The work however, was accompanied with so much noise and fury that it inspired universal terror, and the men in other countries who at first hailed its approach with hope and joy, soon drew back from it as a terrible portent, instead of understanding it as the death throes of old falsities and injustice, and the birth throes of a new birth of time; and so for nearly half a century, no one was able to look at it calmly and compute its exact meaning. Two other reasons prevented its being understood in Britain. (1) Bad as the state of things was in Britain, politically, morally, socially, there was not a tittle of the rottenness and hollowness that was in France. A century and a half before, the British people had got up a considerable conflagration on their own account, in which they had burnt up a lot of abominations, such as Star Chambers, pillories, Divine right of King and Bishop to do wrong if they liked, and so forth. The French conflagration was long delayed, and so when it did come, it was an enormous one and very thorough, and the brightness of it and the sound of it, went through all the earth. But in Britain they could see no necessity for such a fire, and so attributed it all to the devil. They thought that there could be dragonnades, and the glitter of the *Grand Monarque* bought by the drudgery of millions, and *parcs aux cerfs*, and France burdened with debt to adorn a Pompadour, and sent to war because she willed it; that there could be hungry crowds whose petition of grievances was answered only by a new gallows 40 feet high; that there could be Bastilles and *lettres de cachet*, and laws enacting that when a seigneur returned from the chase with his feet cold, he was not to kill more

than two of his villeins to warm his feet in their warm entrails; and that such a state of things could continue because it was convenient for the *Noblesse*, and because the King was called most Christian and the eldest son of the Church, and the people should believe it was all for their good, or that if a change was to be made, it could be made in the way of peaceable reform. (2) Another reason why the Revolution was not understood in Britain, was that John Bull is not very anxious, and perhaps not very able to understand anything that is not an exact copy of something in his own tight little island. And above all things the idea of learning anything from France, was to him an absurdity. Frenchmen! were they not merely skinny grimacing mounseers, monkeys rather than men, the whole of them Papists or infidels, did not they eat frogs, and was not one Englishman able to thrash a dozen of them? And so it was that though at that time there was Burns in Scotland, and youths like Coleridge and Wordsworth, at Cambridge, and generous hearts rising up all over the land, who yearned for better things than the social injustice and the no faith with lip service that their century offered them, yet public opinion ran strongly against all such new lights, and denounced them with loud universal hue and cry, as Jacobins, Levellers, Infidels, &c. &c.

It is comparatively easy to stir the mob into a tumult, especially if you can offer it some striking act, or some suspected person to abuse, or some taking cry to raise. But let the cry be as loud and many-throated as you will, can it alter the stern facts of the case? Was it well, at that time, with "Merrie England," with "Protestant England," with "Bible-loving Britain!" Well, with Whiteboys and Captain Rock, with Orangemen and Ribbonmen, with hunger and anarchy, with petty persecution and dastardly retaliation, in Ireland! Well, in England, with pluralists and sinecures and Justices' justice; with less money spent on the education of the whole people than "the first gentleman in Europe" spent on his waistcoats; with a Church Establishment that gathered in its tithes but made no effort of extension at home or abroad, cried lustily "No Popery," but scarcely kept in repair the old Churches that Popery had built,—that blossomed out in no works of faith and charity, that inspired not the heart of the people with hope and trust to swell out in million-toned psalms of praise to a



living God. It was a state of things that needed reform, and a reform that would go deeper than Ballot-boxes and Universal Suffrage could. And what characterizes the Nineteenth Century is that Reformers came, came with stern, wholesome, prophet-poet teaching and healing; that there has been continual protest since against materialism in philosophy and theology, against unreality of all kinds and injustice of all kinds; and that, though the old evils are not dead, and though new ones came in their train, and the Century had to bear the accumulated iniquities of the past and the present, yet reform has been made, the battle of truth is being fought by men of "inwardness, faith and power," and not without hope of ultimate success.

And now you ask me, what were the precise evils to be grappled with, and who are "the mighties" that went down into the arena? I. The old faith in God as the living God had wholly died out, or been replaced by a faith in a system or a catechism. "The English Squire of the Seventeenth Century," says Carlyle, "clearly appears to have believed in God, not as a figure of speech, but as a very fact, very awful to the heart of the English Squire. He wore his Bible doctrine round him as our Squire wears his shot belt; went abroad with it, nothing doubting." Very little of that will the man who studies the Eighteenth Century find in it. The forms of religion were pretty well kept up; but people did not seem to consider that they were living a lie if they did not translate their avowed beliefs into practice. "Our incomparable Liturgy" was regularly read in the English churches, and in all parish schools in Scotland the rising generation had the Shorter Catechism well drilled into them by the aid of taws or birch, and by virtue of endless repetitions, which made urchins as glib on the mysteries of original sin, the covenant of works, or effectual calling, as on pitch and toss, hide and seek, or hunt the slipper. The religious framework of society was considered by the orthodox to be as near perfection as possible, and to stand firm and four square, a pattern to the world. There were terrible penal laws against blasphemers, atheists, and any who attacked Christianity. Episcopalians had to keep very quiet in Scotland, so had Nonconformists in England, and so had Roman Catholics everywhere. True, there were some sad defections

which it was feared might bring down the judgments of Heaven on the offending nation. Thus the Parliament had repealed the penal laws against witches, and the Scottish Seceders, in lifting up their testimony against the Church, made it one of their formal grounds of complaint that the General Assembly had discontinued to petition Parliament to re-enact them, although it was plainly written in Scripture, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Still the national testimony for Protestant truth, and against all other, was accepted "as on the whole satisfactory," by all except a few Davie Deans, who would take nothing less than the imposition of the Solemn League and Covenant on the three kingdoms. And so preaching went on and drill catechism went on, but somehow the machinery did not grind out living faith; and it would seem that men then persuaded themselves that the machinery was so perfect that it would do of itself, *sans* faith or life. It had worked wonders once, men said; why should it not work wonders always. The fault could not be in it. So a serpent of brass that Moses had made once worked wonders; but centuries after, when incense was burned to it by the children of Israel, it was considered a pious act in Hezekiah to break it in pieces.

In proportion as faith in God died out, arguments for His existence multiplied. Elaborate proofs were crawn out with smallest possible result. To prove the being of God! Alas! alas! if men don't believe in that, how can any formal proof satisfy them? The very attempt is a logical absurdity, for you must have more in your conclusion than you can have in your premises. Does the Bible begin with proving the existence of Deity, or construct an argument on the Trinity? Do men seek to prove by something clearer than light that there is such a thing as light? The problem of "where shall I place myself to escape from my own shadow," or "how by lifting, shall I lift up myself," or "how shall I be able to fold my own body in my arms," could be more easily dealt with than this, of "how shall a man who lives in God include the idea of God under the forms of his understanding?" But as fast as one proof was disposed of, another was prepared, with, however, only one undoubted result—that Religion was getting altogether destroyed in the contest. Men couldn't help thinking that the question was not very pressing or

essential, when so much could be said on both sides. The patient died while the rival doctors wrangled over him.

And not only was God to be syllogistically proved, but morality also. A foundation and a standard of right and wrong must be found, and lo! after much searching a notable one was found,—Bentham and Paley the finders thereof. Right was right because it was useful to us, because it ensured the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Wrong was wrong for the contrary reason. Such was the sawdust that was offered to the soul for food. Under the reign of Beelzebub, then, right would be wrong, and wrong right.

Now the history of the last half century proves that, to whomsoever due, some very different principles have been operating silently, and that if a restoration of belief has not been effected, there has been at least the demolition and carting away of a good deal of rubbish, for which beneficent work let us be most thankful. It has come to be accepted now that a man's belief is one that ought to work, and that it is his first duty to make it work by modelling his life on it, and the outward world too, as far as lies in him. If he does not, his belief and his worship are called shams, and he himself is called hypocrite and humbug. This principle has had already a portentous influence on the old religious forms and institutions, and it threatens changes still more startling. There is a terrible restlessness about men now-a-days, and Lord Melbourne's principle of "can't you let it alone," is made no account of whatever. What men believe, that they endeavour to express by action. Look at what this principle has brought about in Scotland, for principles develope themselves more thoroughly there than in England. The Church began to awake; saw that it really had a Divine mission; that as the work had increased far beyond its provision for meeting it, there must be fuller equipment provided straightway; and that the ideal of a National Church required that to be supplied to them by the State. But the Dissenters, who during the Church's sleep had multiplied greatly, had an ideal also, which was that religion, like any other commodity, should come under the ordinary laws of supply and demand, and that the State must have neither part nor lot in the matter. They set up their standard, and Socinians, Romanists, Infidels gathered round

it,—queer allies for the descendants of the Erskines, and the most “true blue” sons of the Covenant. Thus commenced the Voluntary Controversy, in which abstract principles were fearlessly applied by both parties to the determination of the pressing practical questions of the day, and which ended in a quasi Church victory, inasmuch as its claim was allowed by the Government and a few morsels were doled out to it from the Exchequer. But this was scarcely the beginning of the end. The Church party, in its examination of principles, had constructed a theory of a State Church which, however beautiful in itself, was hardly consistent with the actual facts of the case. They had done so, however, not to defeat the Voluntaries, but in perfect honesty. They meant that their theory should work; and when the Government answered that it interfered with vested rights, they professed to be very sorry, but couldn’t see that that was much of an argument. Vested rights were important, but consistency and honesty were much more important. And so it just came to this:—“our Church theory must be carried out or we will disrupt, smash up the Church.” The powers that be were incredulous; the day for that sort of thing they thought was long gone by. What! that the Clergy, of all people in the world, should be capable of self-sacrifice, of enthusiasm, of originality! No, no. They were too prudent; at the last moment they would salve their consciences with some compromise and draw back. Leave the Church they had struggled for and whose ancestral glory and present strength they were so proud of! Leave their crowded kirks, and pleasant manse, and secured stipends! No; it was not in human nature. But when the long procession of Ministers and Elders streamed out of the Assembly Hall and down the High Street of Edinburgh, and the strongest National Church in Europe was disrupted in twain, even statesmen learned that new forces, and forces not set down in any Benthamite philosophy, had to be taken account of in an estimate of human nature. The Church History of England during the same period exhibits the operation of the same principles, though the results have never been brought together in any such magnificent *coup de theatre* as that which inaugurated the Free Church of Scotland. Young men who studied at Oxford forty years ago had the same creed, liturgy and rubric that their



predecessors had, but then they found in them a theory of a Church that made it a very different thing from a mere moral police establishment. What, they said, Clergymen are Priests then; there is a grace conferred with orders in virtue of the *opus operatum*, and Apostolical succession is a sober reality; Priests can hear confession of sins then, and give absolution; Priests must offer a sacrifice, and that sacrifice is the body and blood of the Lord! If so, let us assert our true position. Thus commenced "the movement," of which only the first act is ended. At once it took shape and standing that attracted all eyes. Men like John Keble, Hurrell Froude, Pusey, Newman, could not be pooh-poohed. The results could not be pooh-poohed. Oxford was leavened with a spiritual life that it had not known since the Reformation. Men who really believed, men in earnest, gave the tone to its society. The "Tracts for the Times" defined their position. No. 90 was their ultimatum. England rejected it, and the party were then in the same position that the Scottish Non-Intrusionists were when their Committee broke off the negotiations with the Government. But the Scotchmen had the easier task before them. They had only to construct a new Church, and they had a fervid democracy at their backs. But the Neo-Anglicans were precluded by their own principles from schism, except a schism that would take them into the camp of the enemy, and they had not moulded public opinion into ripeness for that, and few of themselves were ripe for it. And so the party broke up, the majority remaining in the Church, resiling to gather strength and to prepare the slow public mind of England for their next advance; the more intrepid minority sacrificing everything, and at the call of principle joining the Roman Church. Now the astonishing thing is that the men who laud the heroism of Chalmers, Cunningham, Candlish, and their confreres most loudly, refuse to see any moral beauty, any faith, in Faber, Manning, or John Henry Newman, though they acted in obedience to precisely the same principles, and were men of at least equal purity of life, and equal intellectual and spiritual power. Why should there be nothing but praise for Chalmers' honesty, and nothing but blame for Newman's honesty. Because, do you tell me, the former went out for the cause of truth, the latter went out for the cause of error. Precisely. The former went out for

what half a million Scotchmen were taught, during the heat of a ten years' conflict, to believe to be truth; the latter for what two hundred millions of human beings had always believed to be the truth. In both cases I disagree with the Church principles that the men held; in both cases I admire the moral principle by which they were actuated.) Honestly had the Non-Intrusionists written bitter things against the Voluntaries: honesty compelled them to become Voluntaries. Honestly had the Tractarians written bitter things against Rome; the most honest of them became Romanists.

I shall not follow out the course that British Church History has taken during the last quarter of a century, for that would land us in the conflicts of the present day, an interpretation of which I could give only from my own standpoint. To go into such details would be provocative of controversy, which it is the object of this Association to avoid, and my subject does not require me to discuss them on their merits. ¶ This one principle, however, we see clearly in every movement in the world of theology, whether it be the Sabbath question, or the relation of Moses to Christ, or subscription to Confessions of Faith, or Inspiration, or Ritualism;—that men speak out and act out their belief, no matter what the consequences; and that thereby the Churches generally are in a state of ferment that makes it utterly impossible to predict what institutions will stand the test of the next quarter of a century, or what organizations may arise. Is this to be deplored? No: but rejoiced over. But what if our faith gets shaken? If a true faith, it can take care of itself: if a false faith, a mere faith of personal comfort, the sooner it gets shaken, and shaken out of you, the better. If it be faith in articles or a system, the sooner they are thrust into the background, and faith in the living God take their place, the better. If faith be not that blessed, inexorable light of Heaven vouchsafed unto you, by which at your peril you are to walk, what is it? A luxury carefully prepared and labelled, to be kept securely for your private delectation. What a pity such a *bon-bon* should be stolen from you! ¶

The comparative honesty and reality of the Nineteenth Century is seen not only in what it has undone, but also in a small degree in what it has done. It had a great leeway to make up, as well as its own legitimate demand to attend to; but it has gone into

whatever work was deemed necessary with an almost childlike freshness and ardour. It may be called a church-and-school-building, cathedral-restoring, asylum-founding century; an age of societies and agencies and institutes; of Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Orphanages, Reformatories, and Shoe-Black Brigades; of Sisters of Mercy and Christian Brothers, Colporteurs and Bible Women; of Church Congresses, Sunday Schools, and Young Men's Christian Associations. By each and all of them people have been crying out, "We believe, or we think we believe; we must see how our belief will work. We cannot be Atheists, and we shall not be the slaves of cant, and we must prove to ourselves that we are sincere." When there is so much earnestness I cannot believe that it will pass away without corresponding result, though in what form or through what convulsions that may come, I know not. In the meantime it is something that there is earnestness instead of the old indifference; a yearning for truth and faith; a confession of ignorance instead of the sleek Horace Walpole complacency of "I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing."

II. When faith in God is lost, faith in the brotherhood of man is not retained long. I may not tarry now to depict the state of society in the Eighteenth Century; the isolation of classes, the cruelty of the punishments, the brutish ignorance of the peasantry, the deservedly little influence of the clergy, the vulgarity of sentiment and manners, the polite indifference with which the upper ranks regarded all below them. Glimpses of these things you will get in the prosaic truthfulness of Crabbe, but, alas! no prophet voice comes from the Church to denounce them. Now how comes it that, in spite of those evils, which in other countries have always brought on horrible social disorder or foreign conquest, and which when they get to a certain height are apt to increase at a frightfully accelerated rate, England escaped a blood-bath, and stands to-day more secure than she did then? And those evils did bear fruit in this century. The threatened invasion by France postponed the inevitable operation of them, for that knit all Britons into a band of brothers, but it was only a postponement. The moral pestilence about the manufactories increased with every year and with the increase of the population.

The alienation of classes deepened as the rich seemed to get richer and the poor poorer. And bread riots and reform riots, and Swing letters, and blazing hay-ricks and corn-stacks, and "Glasgow Thuggery," and Chartist demonstrations, were all so many mutterings indicating a volcanic state. How has England escaped so far? Because, with returning faith in God, there came returning faith in the brotherhood of man. Burns felt that that must come;

"For a' that, and a' that;  
It's comin' yet for a' that,  
That man to man the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be for a' that."

This century, like all others, has had its one-sided laws, its social anomalies and cruelties, its want of sympathy between classes, but there has been perpetual effort to amend all that. If women were found labouring, harnessed in the mines, or slowly starved as sempstresses; if children were used as brooms to sweep chimneys with, or sent to the factories when they should have been in nurseries: a cry has been raised and heard; new laws have been made, labour has been regulated, education and emigration encouraged. The "Song of the Shirt," and "The Cry of the Human" thrilled through all England. If there were Corn Laws, there were also Ebenezer Elliot's Corn Law Rhymes. Even if there was sin and the sorrow that sin causes, there has been for it pity rather than indignation. We read Hood's "Bridge of Sighs" with choking voice, and Robert Buchanan, in his London Poems, has for his burden the soul of goodness even in persons evil, and the sympathy due from us to them.

Though I have to be brief, let there be no doubt as to my meaning. I have included the evils that had to be redressed under two heads that remind us by contrast of the two great divisions of the law. I might have included them all under the one word "unbelief." For with unbelief in the true there comes necessarily belief in the false, and bondage to it, which again is another and the worst phase of unbelief. When men cease to believe in God, they begin again to believe in ghosts, i. e. in shams. Good men there were in the darkest days, even as in Ahab's reign there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Over broad England many an obscure Methodist local preacher, not with canting whine, but with earnest voice, "in dusky lane and crowded



street," in dark deep pits, where the choke damp and the fire-damp lurked, and on barren wolds, called on the living God; by whom their hearts had been touched, and whom they knew by the name of Saviour. And in Scotland many a priest-like father on Saturday night, and on every night, brought out the "the big ha' bible;" and many learned true wisdom from Boston's "Fourfold State," and perhaps some even from the Confession of Faith. But these seemed as mere "snow flakes on the river." The tide of life swept on, uninfluenced by them. The roar of the world's business drowned their "still small voice." A civilization existed, independent of the Christianity which had given it birth.

And all this has changed. We have not yet entered into the promised land, but instead of the great and terrible wilderness, "buds are blowing, waters flowing." There are "lofts of storied thunder" yet to be set loose on us, but we fear them not. Who then have been the leaders in the new Reform? I find three separate and ultimate centres of influence, in Britain (and it is of it alone I speak, for America is only in short clothes as yet, and need not be taken account of,) Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle. Arnold and Tennyson occupy places scarcely lower.

When I place those men high above all others, I do not mean that they alone have done the work of giving us that spiritual atmosphere in which we live, move and have our being. That is the sum total of the result of ten thousand influences. In every man there is an originality. If you can only appeal to it and draw it out, then he will react on you in return for your action on him: and so subtle and manifold are the relationships thus established, that it is often difficult to know who is the teacher and who the scholar. Linked with each of those men, were names that some would place as high or higher; and many of their followers have attained a more immediate influence and a wider popularity. I am afraid that we could count on our fingers the number in Halifax who are well acquainted with the writings of all of them; but hundreds of others have drank of their spirit in authors who would be proud to be called their disciples. But those men may be called Reformers, not only because they brought new life to Britain, and a light that has been life and strength to many a soul, but because they had faith in that light, lived by it, identified themselves with it, suffered neglect and persecution for it, and always with a sublime assurance of victory. They were not absolutely original. The very keystone of Coleridge's philosophy, the distinction between the reason and the understanding is taken *en bloc* from Kant. Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," is based wholly on Fichte's central principle of the Divine Idea pervading the visible universe and always lying at the bottom of appearance. And all of them are disciples of the critical philosophy which has given an

impulse to the human mind, greater than any it has received since the Revival of Letters in Europe consequent on the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, and the dispersion of Greeks with Greek literature through Europe. But they received truth from other quarters, because they sought for truth with their whole souls, and would not be satisfied with "Sentences." And when they found it they did not chatter it like apes, but first made it wholly their own, and then preached it with original unquestioning authority. And men listened to them and believed, and went and preached likewise.

What is the system these men teach? Are they High, or Low, Calvinists, or Arminians, Romanist, or Protestant? They have no system. What? are they not dangerous then? Is the Bible dangerous? Is Nature dangerous? Is the soul of man dangerous? I cannot find much of system in any of the Hebrew prophets. I fear they would fare ill were they now living, if they presented themselves to a Bishop to be examined, or applied to a Presbytery for license. System! it is a good thing, a necessary thing. Every man must throw the truths that are credible to him into some shape or system, else his mind will be a mere chaos. But is not that form a mere human thing, a convenience for himself? And woe to him when he thereafter looks at all truth through that, when he substitutes that to himself for truth. For then he worships an idol, then he becomes a Pharisee. In fact one of the great Reforms effected by those men was to make their generation understand the relation between "our little systems" and God. It was a Reform much needed. Men called themselves Lutherans who had none of Luther's spirit; and Protestants but protested against all innovation. They built sepulchres and raised monuments to the old Reformers, but they were not the representatives of the Reformers, but of those who had persecuted and killed the Reformers. For they bowed down before the systems of Dort and Westminster, of Owen and Newton, of Laud or Wesley, as the Schoolmen had bowed down before Aristotle, or the Monks before Pope or Council. And it was a great thing for men to be taught that as "Systems of Nature" have to be modified as science advances, so much more systems of faith according to the essential law of life must be sloughed off, and kept not as shackles on faith but as suggestive historical documents, as landmarks showing whither and how high the tide of life in our forefathers had flowed. And so it has been truly said\* that "while men now thirst not less for spiritual truth, they no longer believe in the capacity of system to embrace and contain that truth as in a reservoir for succeeding generations. They must seek for it themselves afresh in the pages of Scripture and the ever dawning light of spiritual life, or they will simply neglect and put it past as an old story."

\*Tulloch's *Leaders of the Reformation*, p. 169, and 88. See also "Ecce Homo," pp. 267, 8.

What, then, is the positive teaching of those men? And now I feel the mistake of this paper. It attempts too much. Had I confined myself to one name, I might have given you a general idea of his work; but how to go over them all in the last half of a lecture to a popular audience! All that I can hope to do is to stimulate your curiosity, and provoke you to read for yourselves. For the most able and appreciative articles on Wordsworth and Coleridge, let me refer you to two articles, written I understand by Professor Shairp of St. Andrew's, in the *North British Review* of 1864 and 1865. Carlyle and Tennyson are more generally read in America, and I may therefore take for granted that they are not wholly unknown here.

Coleridge—what did he for us? Listen to a few testimonies. Wordsworth says, "I have known many men who could do wonderful things, as Cuvier, Davy, Scott: but Coleridge was the only wonderful man I have ever known." Hazlitt says of him, "He is the only person, I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius. He is the only person from whom I ever learned anything." Arnold called him the greatest intellect that England had produced within his memory. John Stuart Mill though himself of an entirely opposite school, has said that "no one has contributed more to shape the opinions among younger men, who can be said to have any opinions at all." Mr. Maurice always speaks of him reverently, as the great religious teacher of these latter times. Edward Irving in the dedication of one of his works to him, acknowledges to have received more precious truths from him than from any other teacher. Similar testimonies might be given from John Wilson, De Quincy, Dr. Newman, &c. His personal influence over the thinkers of the day during the last eighteen years of his life, from 1816 to 1834, when he had found a haven of rest in Mr. Gilman's house, Highgate, near London, was almost incredible. He drew around him the ardent inquiring spirits of the age, who listened to his wondrous monologues with rapt and reverent attention: the Hares, John Sterling, Irving, and such like, each of them a centre of influence. The men who knew him and survived him, always spoke of him with an awe due rather to a demigod than a man. Charles Lamb, to the end of his life was often heard muttering, "Coleridge is dead, is dead." He once said solemnly, "I cannot think without an ineffectual reference to him." His authority on almost every subject, philosophical, or theological, on Church or State, was decisive with many. Even the *Edinburgh Review* of last year says, "when Mr. Mill quoted 'the Lay Sermon' as an authority of political opinion, in a late debate in Parliament, it must have sounded to more than one of his elder hearers as an echo of his youthful days, when a passage from 'the Aids to Reflection,' was a valuable support on either side of a religious controversy." Well, as it would be absurd in

me to attempt an exposition or analysis of Coleridge's religious philosophy to-night, these testimonies may incline you to inquire for yourselves. But do not be taken in by the only American edition I have seen; one that has the audacity to offer you the *Biographia Literaria* and *Friend*, as his collected prose works. Coleridge's prose without even the "Aids to Reflection"! A dish of bacon and beans without the bacon, is nothing to that. And it was by his prose works and his conversation, rather than by his poems that he moulded the age as far as it was moulded by him. Some have regretted that he turned from poetry to prose; but never was there greater mistake. It was only in virtue of his being a poet that he was able to make the discoveries in morals and theology that he did; and none but men who forget how terribly real and pressing are the root questions there, would have kept him singing all his life even "Genevieves" and "Ancient Mariners." For while Coleridge was everything, he was emphatically the religious philosopher.

What was the path he trode? He began life as a Radical; he ended as a Conservative politician. If every man is born either an Aristotelian or a Platonist, we may say that he began as the former and ended as the latter. He began life as an Unitarian preacher; he ended a profound believer in the Trinity, the Fall of Man, and the redemption by Christ.

The eighteenth century has gone on the principle that all our knowledge comes to us through the senses, and that what we cannot form a definite conception of, does not exist. It seemed a most satisfactory common sense principle, it offered to explain everything, it suited a sleek and shallow age. Of course it explained everything that it could explain, but then it left all the great puzzles of thought and life untouched. It is easy enough to construct a philosophy that ignores the primal instincts, the most stubborn facts of our nature, but what is the good of it? Yet such was the only system then taught in the English Universities, and they are the fountain-head of national life. As the Universities of Britain are to-day, so is the whole tone of British sentiment to-morrow. Of course such a philosophy made men Unitarians, or unbelievers altogether, it substituted utility for morals, egotism for reverence, jingle for poetry, and "wax figgers" for art. Coleridge accepted it—as he always accepted everything—devoutly, and every step of the way, from that Sahara to "the land flowing with milk and honey" at which at length he arrived, he had to fight. When from the Mystics who appealed to what he felt was a higher faculty in him than the logical understanding, he got to Kant and learned that there was a faculty in man in virtue of which he was brought into immediate contact with super-sensible truth, the scales fell from his eyes. The rest of his way as a philosopher was easy.



His old dogmas dropped from him one by one; and when his own felt weakness, his own need of Christ, made him a Christian, he gave himself to the work of showing the reasonableness of Christianity, of how it and man's moral nature fit into each other, of linking to it all mental products, of setting it on high as the crown and glory of humanity and society; in a word, of constructing a Christian philosophy which, while we may not agree with it in every particular, is yet the noblest that has been offered to us since the seventeenth century, and which has saved many of the most earnest spirits of our time from blank unbelief. If we have now a preacher like Maurice, who, educated as an Unitarian, and for the Bar, turned aside from everything else to proclaim, to classes whom perhaps no other man could have reached, Jesus Christ as the representative ideal of humanity and the head of all human society, and the Church as God's means of educating the nations into faith in His Fatherhood, and the brotherhood of man to each and every other man—let Coleridge more than any one else, be thanked. And yet he it was who in his time was most suspected by the orthodox, and most jeered at by the oracles of liberalism; and one of whose most precious works, I learn from a lecture of Robertson's, of Brighton, was only a few years ago\* "denounced as the most pestilential work of our day, by one of those miserable publications mis-called religious newspapers, whose unhallowed work it seems to be on earth to point out to its votaries whom they ought to suspect instead of whom they ought to love, and to sow the seeds of dissension, malice, hatred and all uncharitableness." "Religious Newspapers!" The Irish Church I believe means a church *not* for the Irish people. So most certainly "a Religious Newspaper," means a newspaper that has no religion.

Wordsworth was born two years before Coleridge and quitted Cambridge about the time that Coleridge entered. An ardent Republican at first in politics, though intended by nature for a speculative Tory; a Radical in poetry, in religion, in everything. And no wonder! What he wanted was to protest against the conventionalisms that oppressed him, the humbug with which men had agreed to cheat each other. When a student is hounded into "prayers" that the Tutors and Professors never dreamt of attending, he is apt to revolt. But Wordsworth was "a chimney that consumed its own smoke." His rebellion against his environments was different from Coleridge's. He did not enlist as a recruit in the Light Dragoons; did not canvass for subscribers to impossible Radical Newspapers; planned no pantisocracy for the banks of the Susquehanna or any other banks. What a contrast between the two, as there always has been between two Reformers raised up to

do one work: Wordsworth, "his soul was like a star and dwelt apart," but blessed also in his home and in all his domestic relations. Coleridge, weak, sinning, craving for sympathy, tossed from billow to billow, and not finding a port till life was drawing to its close. Wordsworth given to musing rather than talking, ever and anon uttering immortal lines, which would have been lost to the world had not sister or wife treasured them up. Coleridge pouring forth to every comer a stream of mighty language, "like some great Orellana or the St. Lawrence," freighted with the riches of the universe; or as Lamb put it in answer to his question, "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?"—"I n-never heard you d-do anything else." Coleridge had read everything, and observed little. Wordsworth had read almost nothing, but nothing in nature had escaped his observation. The one irresolute, never up to time, never finishing anything, shuffling and corkscrewy in his gait, never able to decide which side of the garden walk he would take. The other strong, confident in himself and in truth, bearing the burden and heat of the day and not even asking for the penny,—what more can we say of him?

"The star of the unconquered will,  
It rises in my breast  
Serene and resolute and still  
And calm and self-possessed."

Sublimity of life than Wordsworth's it seems to me has not been lived in those latter days. Coleridge always tried to combine in his writings two things, immediate popularity and profit, with new truth, deep truth, abstract truth, and always failed. No such compromise was ever tried by Wordsworth. He had his message to deliver, and he delivered it. If men heard, well. If they did not, he knew they would. In 1814 the "Excursion" was published. Six years after, the first edition of five hundred copies was not exhausted. What was that to him? Calmly in a calm essay he writes; "Foolish must he be who can mistake for the *vox populi* which the Deity inspires, a local acclamation or a transitory outcry,—transitory, though it be for years, local though from a nation." And to Lady Beaumont he had written\* explaining why his poetry could never be popular with the world of fashion;—"It is an awful truth that there neither is, nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of *consideration* in society. This is a truth and an awful one; because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God." And again, "Every great poet is a teacher. I wish

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\* Memoirs of Wordsworth, Vol. I. p. 333-342.

either to be considered as a teacher, or nothing." And again to his friends who revered him, when they complained bitterly of the injustice of the public;—"Make yourselves at rest respecting me; I speak the truths the world must feel at last." The world's taste had been vitiated; but the only way in which you can make an old toper appreciate pure water, is by giving him pure water to drink for a considerable time. Poetry had abandoned its high mission of teaching the world, and trusted to "perfumers' and milliners' shops" rather than to nature and the immortal in man; to jingle and glitter, to "storm and stress" rather than to the vision and the faculty divine? If the poet wished to interest, he did not choose a subject that appealed to men's ordinary experience and feelings. No: every thing at home was hackneyed; the farther away he went the better. And so at last the world was getting nothing but "veiled prophets of Khorassan," and Ghebres, and Giaours and Corsairs, and blood and thunder. And what then could the world make of a poet to whom

"The meanest flower that blows could give  
Thoughts do often lie too deep for tears,"

or of an epic, the hero of which was an old Scotch pedlar! What could a critic like Jeffry, who though a "smart man" had as much poetry in him as a saw-mill has, make of it, when as he snarled, "the other persons of the drama are, a retired military chaplain, grown half an atheist and half a misanthrope, the wife of an unfortunate weaver, a servant girl with her natural child, a parish pauper, and one or two other personages of equal rank and dignity." The vulgarity was frightful; equal almost to that of the Bible. In fact as Coleridge had early told Wordsworth, "every author as far as he is great and at the same time original must create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed," a profound remark that suggests much to me. We can hardly understand now the Revolution that "the Lakers" as they were absurdly called, effected, or how utterly fallen was the public taste then, or how absurd the recognized canons of criticism. You have all read "We are Seven." Well, think of friend James Tobin imploring Wordsworth not to publish that, "as it would make him everlastingly ridiculous": or of the gentleman who when the "Cumberland Beggar" was read to him, said, "Why, that is very pretty; but you may call it *anything but poetry*." But the world did "feel at last." In 1817 Blackwood's Magazine was started, with men on its staff who judged poetry not by the Jeffrey canons; and in the very next year John Wilson came forth in its pages to proclaim again and again what manner of man he had found Wordsworth to be; and the tide turned, and to what extent may be judged from the reception he received at Oxford in 1839, when he and Bunsen went up to receive the degrees that had been conferred on them. Dr. Arnold

who was present writes ;—"to me, remembering how old Coleridge had inoculated a little knot of us with the love of Wordsworth when his name was in general a by-word, it was striking to witness the thunders of applause, repeated over and over again with which he was greeted in the theatre by undergraduates and masters of Arts alike." Truth had triumphed. England could once more appreciate spiritual truth. And Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Tennyson, (forgive me for classing Tennyson with any others) and Jean Ingelow have learned of him and continue his influence.

What then was Wordsworth's mission, for mission he had, and never did ancient prophet or consecrated priest feel his call more impressively, or live up to it more truthfully. He said that he made no vows, but that unknown to him vows were made for him. Robertson of Brighton, in his lecture on him, says, and in all reverence, that what he did\* "was the work which the Baptist did when he came to the pleasure-laden citizens of Jerusalem to work a reformation; the work which Milton tried to do when he raised that clear calm voice of his to call back his countrymen to simpler manners and to simpler laws." To Wordsworth this life of ours in itself was an infinitely little thing.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

To him,

"Our noisy years seemed moments in the being  
Of the eternal silence."

And yet he saw men slaves to time and earth, to appearances and customs, as if they had no souls, as if there were no reality beyond the seen and temporal. His preaching to them by word and life was,

"The wise man I affirm can find no rest  
In that which perishes; nor will he lend  
His heart to aught that doth on time depend."

And the professed teachers of the day had neither eyes nor ears. Lofty was his contempt for them; shallow moralist, shallow man of science, shallow philosopher;—

"One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling  
Nor form nor feeling, great nor small;  
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,  
An intellectual all in all!"

The general Atheism of men's lives terrified him. They professed to be Christians, but they held no communion with God. There was one all-prevailing spirit of worldliness. Nature was to them a heap of husks, the bible a catechism of truths imposed on them from without. The soul was so steeped in the world that it could not interpret either. And the prophet-poet felt that it was

\* Lectures and Addresses, p. 244.

laid on him to cry out against this and to call the dead to life. Listen first to his protest;—

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;  
Little we see in nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;—  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;—  
For this, for everything, we are out of time;—  
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be  
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

And next, as to what he felt to be his work.\* “The Sun,” he said, “was personified by the ancients as a charioteer driving four fiery steeds over the vault of heaven; he was called Phœbus, and was regarded as the god of poetry, of prophecy, and of medicine. Phœbus combined all these characters. And every poet has a similar mission on earth; he must diffuse health and light; he must prophesy to his generation; he must teach the present age by counselling with the future; he must plead for posterity; and he must imitate Phœbus in guiding and governing all his faculties, fiery steeds though they be, with the most exact precision, lest instead of being a Phœbus, he prove a Phæton, and set the world on fire, and be hurled from his car; he must rein in his fancy and temper his imagination, with the control and direction of sound reason, and drive on in the right track with a steady hand.”

This, then, was Wordsworth's work;—to exalt the spiritual over the material, the eternal over the transitory, the future over the present. In Christ he himself found all truth; and in Christian education alone had he any faith, while he had no faith at all in highly-wrought religious expression in youth; and the essence of Christian education was a contemplating of the character and personal history of Christ. “Work it,” he said, “into your thoughts, into your imagination, make it a real presence in the mind.” What distinctive work was accomplished by Wordsworth as a religious reformer of his age? We pointed out that the Eighteenth Century had lost faith in God as the living God, and in human brotherhood. Now I believe that while Coleridge had most to do with restoring faith in God, Wordsworth had most to do with restoring faith in humanity. He has been accused of losing his own faith;—of beginning as a Democrat and ending as an Aristocrat. But stationariness is not consistency; and a man must sometimes change the form of his views if he would be true to the

\* Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 7.



principle of them. So, when Wordsworth was a Radical, he didn't mean that one man was actually as good as another, but that the divine was in every man, and that, if he were true to it no matter at what work he was engaged, he was worthy of all honor. In later years, when he was a Tory, he didn't mean that the name, or the wealth, or the plush made the man, but that insight, independence, worth were the true standards, and that the best way both of encouraging and of discovering such qualities was to have different orders in society, and the lines of each well defined. He may have appeared extreme at both periods; but in principle he never varied. And there can be no doubt that he was the great teacher to his age of the actual oneness and the true glory of humanity. In opposition to the old, conventional habit of looking at "persons of quality" and the "masses" as two distinct orders of beings; in opposition to the two great facts of modern society, viz., the accumulation of wealth and the division of labour, the tendency of which is to strengthen that habit, and even to give it a basis in fact, he drew his characters to show that there is but one human heart, and that the great lack in the land was the lack of sympathy between the different classes, while he protested against cutting off any man's life from nature or stunting its general growth. For, said he,\* "not by bread alone is the life of man sustained; not by raiment alone is he warmed;—but by the genial and vernal inmate of the breast, which at once pushes forth and cherishes; by self-support and self-sufficing endeavours; by anticipations, apprehensions, and active remembrances; by elasticity under insult, and firm resistance to injury; by joy and by love; by pride, which his imagination gathers in from afar; by patience, because life wants not promises; by admiration; by gratitude, which—debasement him not when his fellow-being is its object—habitually expands itself, for his elevation, in complacency towards his Creator."

To heal the barrenness of the age, to dispel its darkness, and bring in the wider day, the man of large thought and the man of profound meditation and observation had been given. Another man was needed, and he too was sent. When unbelief reigned, shams, lies, hollow forms cropped up. Men bolstered themselves up on words that did not represent things. There was a parade and fuss, as if work were being done, but it was "all action and no go." A destructive Reformer then was needed as well as the two constructive, and Thomas Carlyle came.

Born A. D. 1795, in the Border Country that has given birth to Edward Irving, Mungo Park, and many another name well-known in African, and Indian, and British story; brought up a

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\* Convention of Cintra, p. 164, 165.

Scotch Presbyterian of the old-fashioned sort, and intended at first for the Church—he breaks away, but can't help carrying much of the faith and its traditions with him, to mould them into new shapes, and to go with them whithersoever he was led. "Iron-mouth" was the family nickname in their native district. No better name for Carlyle, for no grip is like his. In the year that Coleridge died he took up his abode at Chelsea, and ever since he has exercised the influence over the most earnest young minds of the day, that Coleridge had wielded for 18 years previous. No prophet has spoken with so authoritative voice since Luther's time, if then. He does not argue: he announces truth with authority. He takes his stand on the ultimate fact that there is a conscience, that there is a right and a wrong, that the two are eternally and infinitely different, and that therefore "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" are the two great laws men must obey, and the one as unhesitatingly as the other. Action, therefore, and not thought, is "the final object of man, the highest reality of thought, and the safest, if not the only safe, standard of truth."\* "The melodious speaker," he says, "(as Shakespeare) is great: but the melodious worker is greater than he. Our time cannot speak at all, but only cant and sneer, and argumentatively jargon and recite the multiplication table. Neither as yet can it work, except at mere railroads and cotton-spinning. It will apparently return to chaos soon; and then more lightnings will be needed, lightnings enough, to which Cromwell's was but a mild matter; to be followed by light, we may hope."† Do you call this "stuff?" Well, I am not so sure of that. Take four or five years to read not "extracts," but the great works of Carlyle, and then think over them for other four or five years. If you have anything to say then it will probably be better worth listening to than anything you could say now. The chances are, too, that you will have less to say.

But the most astonishing thing of all is to hear Carlyle called an infidel. To me it would be incredible did I not remember that so has it always been on this side Anno Domini, and on the other side. No such robust faith has there been in Britain since the days of the puritans, as his. Indeed, he has been called a puritan in the guise of the nineteenth century. That does not mean that his creed would square with that of any of the existing Churches; but when will men learn that to identify faith with any organization is the root of all Pharisaism, of all persecution, and of all unbelief? If Coleridge was the broadest, and Wordsworth the deepest, then Carlyle is the most intense man of the age, and the fittest therefore to carry out their principles to the actual moral Reform of man.

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\* Bunsen's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History*, p. 27.

† Cromwell's *Letters and Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 75.

What then is the teaching that he has given to the world? Something of this kind,—that this world is God's world, and that there is no real light or life except in our knowing that, and conforming our life to that truth which is felt by us to be truth; that we can attain to truth only by clearing our minds of cant, cant meaning creeds outworn or hackneyed phrases that we never act out or up to;—that no form of truth expresses all truth, which indeed is quite infinite; and that all formulas being more or less imperfect we should bear with the professed believers in all as long as they are honestly striving to carry out in life what they say they believe, as long that is as there is any human veracity in them;—that what is not in accordance with the eternal truth of God is a lie, and has no reality at all, no power in the universe at all, however wide-swollen it may be; and that, therefore, the liar or the believer in a lie is a fool, no matter how many may be on the same side with him; that nothing, then, but the truth will last, that it is sure to come uppermost and vindicate its ministers, though all the canons, printing presses, and suffrages of the world had once been on the other side; that the man who has had insight into this divine Constitution of things will ever rejoice, that the measure of work he gets done on the side of it will be the measure of his happiness; that he will be calm when others think the foundations are being destroyed; that he will have patience, and believe that silence is the eternal duty of man. There's infidelity for you! It is the gospel of work, the gospel of reality, the gospel that there is a right and a wrong, and that the difference between the two is absolute. It is a faith that was not picked up at second hand, but worked out in his own forge for the covering of his soul's nakedness, every bolt and every rivet in it tried and tested. And wonderful is the effect it has had. Its words of power have sounded over the length and breadth of the land, scourging the sycophant and dilletant; terrifying the hypocrite and the knave; inspiring brave young souls with a love of duty and faith in the possibility of human nobleness, nerving them for battle, and bidding them be of good hope. The style is peculiar, but it is suited to his theme. It is a good style for Carlyle, a bad one for anybody else. Still in spite of the absurdities that have been talked about it, it is oftener simple, regular, and perspicuous, than otherwise. Suggestive allusions, rich and most felicitous imagery, quaint gems, treasures old and new are "sown thick as a field!" Pages, too, of sustained and free flowing eloquence that kindle up your whole soul; trumpet notes of defiance, and heaven's own lightning, against all that is mean, false, or unworthy; piled up sentences of lurid grandeur, marching too with no cumbrous or fettered gait; a humour as broad and a pathos as deep as the heart of universal humanity. And his insight has enabled him to see

not only the truth that exists under appearances in nature and in history, but also in the highest thing of all, a human character. And hence while, Ruskin being judge, Wordsworth is the great landscape painter of the age, Carlyle is the great biographer. He will never take hearsay. If a man have any inherent worth, no amount of former neglect or calumny is permitted to cover him up, or caricature him. Carlyle rescues him, and sets him in the true light. Who does not now accept his hero Cromwell, as the real man, instead of that dark hypocrite and bloody tyrant of our nursery days! And justice rendered even to the "sea green incorruptible" Robespierre, with his probities and pleasures of virtue! And to Friedrich Wilhelm! It was thought a paradox that Wordsworth should find virtues in Laud, and in those who executed Laud. But that is a small thing to Carlyle's commiserating both Louis XVI. and Robespierre! He has studied thoroughly the great wave lines of human character, and with an intuitive sagacity fixes on the keystone of the arch of a man's nature and life. And then he has so much sympathy with every phase of human nature, except the base, that he cannot help entering into the spirit of each life, "weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice." And thus he keeps up our interest in the story, as Dickens in another walk does, by the enumeration and emphasis of particulars grouped round a central idea. His historical figures are living; not logical statuettes, cut clear and sharp by sparkling antithesis, after the manner of Macaulay. Especially when he loves or reverences a character, say a Burns or a Johnson, he conceives it so distinctly, and impresses it on us so passionately, that it steps out of the frame and walks before us, in flesh and blood. And in those two cases, it seems to me, the sympathy has sprung from actual likemindedness; for in ruggedness, hatred of cant, and reverence for the true, he is of kin with brave old Samuel; and he counts a not more distant relationship to Burns in restless stormful energy, and the "pungent passionings," of the poet's imagination and brain. For Carlyle, too, is a poet, though he has never written a stanza, except in the way of translation; and he could write, if he gave himself to it, battle hymns like Luther, and Tyrtæan odes like Burns or Beranger.

What Carlyle's exact political or religious creed may be, I shall not attempt to define. He has not set it forth himself in so many distinct propositions; and it would be somewhat difficult to do so. I take him not so much as a builder up, but as a Jeremiah, one of God's pullers down. And when we cannot plant until we destroy, the man who roots up is as true a reformer as the man who comes after him to sow. Beneficent work,

then, has Thomas Carlyle done. I own my indebtedness to him : I thank God for him.

In the Sixteenth Century the great Reformers came from the ranks of the clergy. In the Nineteenth, all that I have named are laymen. Wonderful is the changed state of society that is indicated by this fact. In the Middle Ages all learning, all intellectual and moral influence, that is, all the real power that sways the world, was confined to the Church, and the Church meant the Clergy. That epoch has passed away for ever. Restore Medievalism ! You might as well try to restore Druidism. The Church's claims to dominate over the whole kingdom of human life were set aside. A particular province was assigned her, and only by her legitimate action there could she influence the general whole. The Clergy became simply one of the Professions, one of the great organs of national life ; and as the members of all professions naturally attend as their first duty to their strictly professional work, it is not wonderful that gradually a Fourth Estate should arise, composed of recruits from all professions and all quarters, to take cognizance of the general interests of humanity. That is what Carlyle means when he says that the true Medieval Church is now to be found only in literary men : they alone discharge its functions. It is they who as Editors of Newspapers and Reviews, writers of articles, tracts, and books, are constantly "administering the discipline of the Church." Everything comes up before their tribunal. No confessional was ever so searching, no authority so omnipresent, no ban so dreaded as is theirs. If a clergyman, or any one else, would now wield an authority beyond the personal and official, he must rise above the mere drill and pipe-clay of his profession ; he must become a literary man. And the Church no longer contains the influences that sway even itself and determine its own growth. In other words, it no longer absorbs in itself the whole human mind. Part is given to it, and other parts to other work ; and the part does not mould the whole, but the whole each part : the regular army has become absorbed in the volunteers and militia. It is impossible, then, to predict from what quarter the Reformers of the age will come. God will send them from the palace or the priesthood, from the sheepfold or the smithy ; when one does come, no class, no profession can avoid being influenced by him. He is God's best blessing to the world, and the world as a rule receives him with neglect, or derision, or worse, while it pays handsomely its parasites and buffoons and fiddlers, for they are its children.

I have named three great men whose work has been to protest against unbelief, materialism, falsehood, in all the hateful shapes they had assumed, and were assuming, in the world in which they lived ; who had insight into the heart of things, and who believed ;



to whom voices were given that they might speak. And who has not heard them? They teach us in the sermons of Irving, and Hare, and Robertson. They preach to us from the pulpits of Stanley, and Maurice, and McLeod, and a thousand others whose thought is to preach a living gospel to living men. And by all the manifold means that modern civilization supplies, their words have been caught up and borne to the ends of the world.

What then of the work they tried to do! Has it been done once for all? No, verily. As long as there is the world, the flesh, and the devil, there will be Augean stables to be cleansed, and the work can be done only by getting living water to run through the stables. Even here and now Hercules is needed! We may not be able to reform the Empire, or the Province, or even Halifax: let us reform ourselves, and then all things are possible. What shall we do, am I asked? "Do," I answer in Carlyle's words, "the duty that lies nearest you!"

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